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S. PETER & S. PAUL'S CHURCH,

MOULTON ——— NORTHAMPTON

THE REV.

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VICAR.

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MOULTON CHURCH.

MOULTON CHURCH.

INTRODUCTION.

This booklet is written in the form of a Guide to Moulton Church, so that the reader may find his own way around the edifice and not miss any objects of interest. It is in three parts as follows :—

1. The History.
2. The Exterior.
3. The Interior.

I. The History.

The discovery of a portion of an Anglo-Saxon Cross beneath the chancel during the restoration in 1884 supports the contention that a Saxon church once existed at Moulton. The name Moulton, at any rate, is Saxon, literally meaning "the town of the mill."

Probably this Saxon church would be built of wood during the 7th century. It is recorded that this church was burnt by the Danes during their incursions in the 10th century. Evidences of Danish occupation exist in the name "thorpe," which means a hamlet. There is a Thorpe-lands in the village and a Kingsthorpe adjoining. It appears that the people of Moulton rebuilt their church, for we read of it being again burnt down by the Danes at the beginning of the 11th century. How long Moulton was without a Church we cannot say, but there is every indication the next church was built of stone and of Norman workmanship. The following are the reasons for this opinion—(1) There are traces of a Norman window in the north aisle arcade, (2) of a Norman window in the chancel south wall, (3) there are three stones in the church wall with Norman carving thereon, (4) and another stone in the east churchyard wall. The following facts confirm this opinion. Doomsday Book, compiled by William the Conqueror in 1086, records that the Norman Baron Grimbald occupied the lands in Moulton. It is also recorded that he handed the church over to the Priory of St. Andrew's in Northampton in 1084. This Priory was a Clugniac monastery rebuilt and endowed by Simon de Liz, Earl of Northampton. It was situated on and around the site of the present St. Andrew's Church. In 1209 the Prior of St. Andrew's endowed Moulton Church, about which time Moulton had its first Vicar. The con-

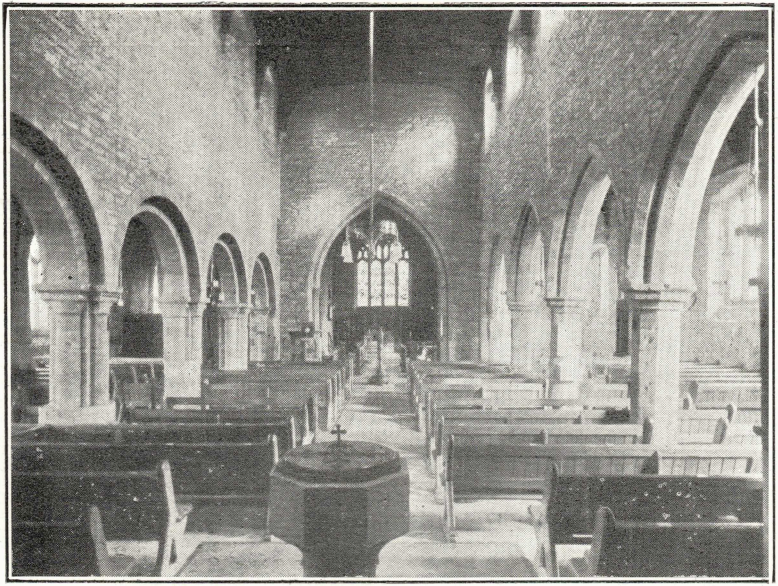
ditions of the endowment were that one mark per annum be paid by the Vicar to the Prior. A mark is 13s. 4d., and was paid right up to the time of the dissolution of the monasteries in 1540 to the Priors of St. Andrew's. Then King Henry VIII. claimed the 13s. 4d. and the Vicars of Moulton paid it each year to that monarch and his successors. The present Vicar gets a bill of 13s. 4d. from the Crown lawyers each year most punctually and pays it as punctually as may be.

From 1263 to 1265 a civil war raged in England between the King (Henry III.) and the Barons led by Simon de Montford, the originator of the House of Commons. Northampton was in the thick of this conflict, being held by the Barons. Moulton came off badly, for its church was levelled to the ground, probably having been used as a fortress. Thus for the third time Moulton lost its church. Thomas de Ryhall was Vicar, 1263-1280, but he did nothing towards rebuilding, neither did Ralph de Stangoot, Vicar 1280 to 1287, but Robert de Botelbrigge, Vicar 1287 to 1313, got things done. Moulton was in the Diocese of Lincoln in those days and in 1298 the Bishop issued a mandate ordering the people of Moulton to rebuild their ruined church. They set to work with a will and the present church is the result, so we shall not be far wrong if we put the date down as 1300. The old Norman style of building (1050-1150) had passed away, likewise the Transitional (1150-1190), also the Early English (1190-1245). It was the period of the beautiful Decorated style (1245-1360) when Moulton church was rebuilt and that style may be seen all around. It was the time of Edward I. and his Queen Eleanor and when the beautiful Eleanor crosses were constructed.

And so the church was built, with its nave, two aisles two chantry chapels, chancel, tower and clerestory. The old church had no aisles as may be seen by the traces of windows in the north arcade and south wall of chancel.

There was a rage for building chantry chapels at this time, therefore aisles were a necessity.

The upper part of the tower was added in the 15th century, when the Perpendicular style, the last word in Gothic architecture, had succeeded the Decorated. A short wooden spire was afterwards added protected with lead. This disappeared about 1645.



MOULTON CHURCH - EAST END.

In the reign of Henry VIII. the monasteries were dissolved. This was done by Act of Parliament, 1540. The Prior of St. Andrew's had already surrendered his monastery in 1538. His name was Francis Abree and he had his reward by being made Vicar of Moulton in 1540. Peterborough diocese was created out of Lincoln in 1539 and in 1542 we read the record of a Vicar of Moulton becoming Dean of Peterborough Cathedral. Thomas Farr succeeded Francis Abree in 1542 being appointed by the King.

The advowson of Moulton passed from the King through several hands until in the reign of Elizabeth it came into the possession of Sir Christopher Hatton, the Lord Chancellor.

Moulton registers now commenced, the first entry being 1565.

In 1816 a gallery was erectod at the west end of the church, which was at the same time newly paved and pewed. Unfortunately a rare old Norman font was destroyed at this time. Its existence is another proof of the old church being Norman. A miniature font, done in Italian style, was substituted and placed in a pew marked "Font." It came to grief at the restoration in 1884, and now lies in pieces in the Vestry.

About 1876 the present organ was erected. In 1884 the bells were rehung and the interior of the tower restored at a cost of £200. At the same time the restoration of the church was commenced, the north aisle rebuilt, the structure new roofed, the interior refitted, with new pulpit, reading desk and font at a total cost of £3,500. The re-opening took place on June 15th, 1886, Bishop Magee performing the ceremony.

The Communion Plate at Moulton consists of an elegant silver cup made in 1607. A silver paten made about 1685, and a silver bread holder made in 1735 and given the same year by Mrs. Sarah Page.

There is also a large Jacobean pewter flagon with lid and three pewter plates.

II. The Exterior.

The Church stands out very prominently being situated on a gentle eminence. On approaching it from Church Street we get a pleasing view and if we pause a few moments outside the gates we are in a good position to take in the beauties of the building.

We first notice **The Tower** has two styles of architecture, the three lower stages being Decorated and the upper Perpendicular, which succeeded the Decorated about 1360. So the Tower has four stages-(1) the ringing chamber, (2) the clock chamber, (3) the old belfry chamber, (4) the new belfry chamber.

The old clock dial (which is now at Holly Lodge) used to be where the little square window is. We shall notice as we go round that the East and West windows of the lower part of the tower are partially built up.

The higher stage was constructed about 1422. It is a fine piece of work of superior stone and masonry. Each window is divided into two lights which are trefoiled. They are each divided across by a horizontal bar called a transome. The sublights under this transome are quatre foiled, the clock dials almost hiding the South and West ones. The tower is battlemented and just below is a row of panelled quatrefoils. Notice the four grotesque gargoyles at each corner. There used to be four pinnacles and their bases are still to be seen. Oliver Cromwell has got the blame for demolishing these and also for knocking down the steeple, the lead being in great demand for Naseby, 1645.

The antique weather cock was examined in 1929 by Dr. J. C. Hudson and Dr. W. Vernon, of the Atmospheric Corrosion Research Committee, and the absence of corrosion in the metal from atmospheric impurities shows that Moulton is one of the healthiest places in England.

We next observe **The Clerestory** (Clerestory means a storey built clear of the lower roof). Notice the five windows with their two trefoiled lights, square heads outside, but segmented or curved inside. There are five windows on the opposite side to correspond. The Clerestory was added late in the 14th century and restored in 1884. The building of aisles caused clerestories to be made so as to admit more light into the church.

We next notice a specimen of **The Grotesque** in church architecture. A pig is carved astride the eave of the clerestory. The opposite eave has a sheep. Much has been written about the grotesques so prevalent in ancient church architecture. But one thing it reveals to us is the fact, that humour existed in the Middle Ages and licence was allowed the facetious masons to express it in stone as they put the finishing touches to their work.

We now approach nearer and observe the four **South Windows,** restored in 1926. The window on the left side of the porch is plainly "Decorated" style. Its label or dripstone springs from a string course. The other three windows are in the late Perpendicular style except the heads. The arches are of the low, segmental, Tudor style and having four trefoil lights in each, probably rebuilt in the days of Henry VII. The window jambs with their wavy moulding show they were once Decorated. No doubt they once had labels springing from the string course which is so noticeable a feature along the wall, being built in to carry off the rain.

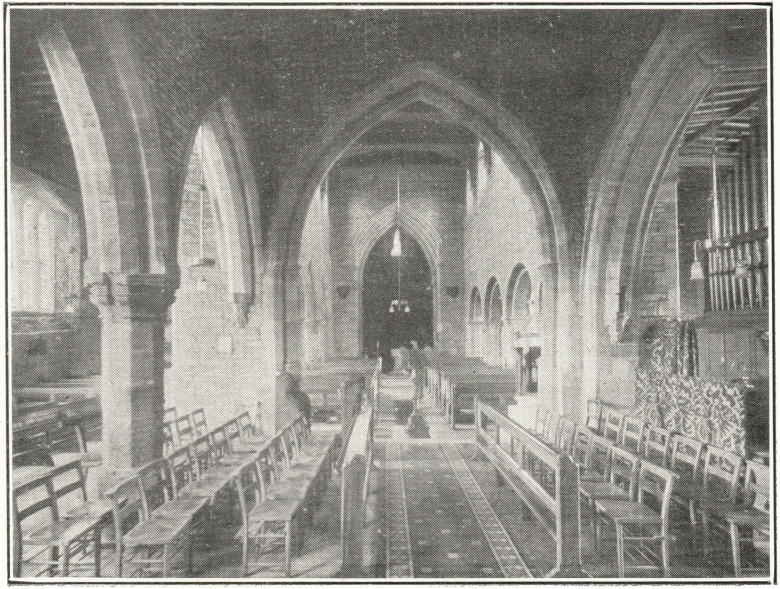
Passing towards the east end we notice the little priests' door, with its label or dripstone. This door interferes with the completion and symmetry of the adjoining window. Note the old wooden sundial with its motto *In caelo quies*, "Rest in heaven."

We now come to the **East End.** At the corner there is a stone overhead with Norman carving upon it, which is further evidence of the existence of a Norman church.

If we stand well back we shall get a good view of the three windows and be able to compare the styles.

No. 1. South-east Window. This is in the Early Decorated style. It has four lights and the mullions intersect giving rise to what is called "Bar Tracery." It is spoilt by being built up at the bottom.

No. 2. Middle Window. This is in the Perpendicular style with four lights cinque foiled. Notice how the mullions are carried right up to the head and the lower and upper portions divided by stone work, above which are eight lights. The tracery here is called "Rectilinear," and the arch is Tudor style. Former window destroyed 1645.



MOULTON CHURCH - WEST END.

No. 3. North-east Window. Here we have a specimen of Decorated work of a later style. The Decorated period had two kinds of tracery, the Geometric evolved from circles, the Curvilinear, formed by ogees or flowing lines (an ogee is a kind of double curve like an S straightened out). The tracery here is Curvilinear or flowing. The lights are trefoil with three quatrefoils in the head.

The ornamental cross was blown off the south gable about 25 years ago. The pieces now lie in the north aisle.

We come now to the **North Side.** The interesting object first to be noticed here is the vault of the Nethercote family, who resided at Moulton Grange (now owned by Mrs. Manfield). The last of the Nethercotes died in 1886, and his widow in 1890. There is also an ancient well. Under the monkey tree is the grave of the Rev. Thos. Sanders, marked by a stone cross. He was Vicar of Moulton for 39 years. Between it and the path is the grave of Edward Britten, the old parish clerk who died in 1853. He was sexton for 33 years and buried 1020 people. Burials do not take place here now, but in the new Cemetery on the Holcot Road, the churchyard being closed for burials by order of the Privy Council in 1881. Looking towards Manor House farm, the circular bounds of the ancient burial mound can be discerned.

Turning round towards the church a view of the clerestory windows may again be seen. Notice the sheep carved on the eave and the grotesque gargoyles.

The north windows are not exactly alike, but are all specimens of the Decorated period, the westerly one is uncusped.

The old north door is interesting with its ancient hinges. The funeral processions used to pass through here and there is a piece cut out the side to allow the bier to pass through.

We turn to the **West End** where we see another simple Decorated window uncusped. The ancient west doorway is interesting with its pointed arch and wave moulding. It would be built about 1300. The right hand side of arch shows signs of repairs, but the masons have not completed it with mouldings to correspond with the left side.

There is a small two-light window just above. The next window is very simple and has a wooden mullion !

We now come round to the south side again and before we reach the porch, two more curious stones can be seen rather low down in the wall with Norman carving, one being near the water pipe.

III. The Interior.

We now approach **The Porch** which was constructed late in the 14th century. The lamp has only recently been put up (1929) when the church was lit with gas for the first time. On the right hand stone seat is a portion of a tomb stone dated 1607.

The church door way arch is pointed, and chamfered or bevelled with a dripstone or label. The shafts on each side are gone leaving their capitals in the air.

The door has a ponderous lock and key. A verger once half killed a man with the key as he came from ringing the curfew one dark night, because he tried to frighten him by acting the ghost.

Behind the door is **The Soldiers Memorial,** a marble tablet with the list of the names of the fallen in the Great War. The names of all those who enlisted may be seen on the adjoining pillar.

We now pass along **The South Aisle.** We first note the brass tablet to Dr. John Colin Matheson, a beloved physician, who died in 1904. The next is of marble to Edward Gee, 1799 and his wife. His daughter Charlotte is commemorated by the next. It is the sculpture of a female figure leaning on an urn with a lamb at her feet. She died in 1805, aged 4 years, and the following is the epitaph :—

Early, bright, transient, chaste as morning dew
She sparkled, was exhaled and went to heaven.

There are several slabs towards the end of the aisle, the most interesting being that of the Rev. Walter Poole, Vicar of Moulton, 1836 to 1838, and in the corner on the right, the Rev. William Stanton, Vicar, 1737 to 1762, with his wife and daughter. This Vicar carved his name in the Vicarage cellar in 1737. See mural tablets above.

There is a little mural tablet in the far corner. On it is written James Rice, died June 5th, 1797, aged 3 years.

Sweet bud of hope. He sleeps
To wake and blosom through an endless spring.

Before proceeding to the chancel we examine the shaft of the **Anglo-Saxon Cross.** It was discovered under the chancel during the restoration, 1884-1886. Details may be read at the end of this book as supplied by Major C. A. Markham.

Near the Rev. Stanton's grave may be seen traces of a priests' door with four centred arch, which was once the entrance into the chancel.

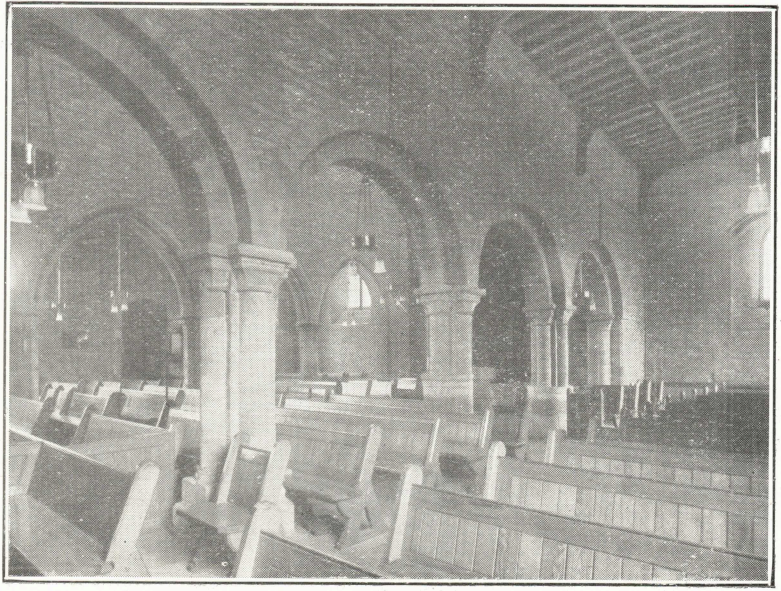
The window here has already been described. The organ once stood underneath it.

The Piscina in the corner is the most elegant of the three we have in the church. It is of trefoil shape, contains basin with 4 flutes (or grooves) and a label round the outer edge. Notice the ledges where the shelf used to be fixed.

Piscinas, or wash basins, used to contain water for the priest to rinse his hands and the sacred vessels. In some churches the piscinas are double. The word literally means "a little fish pool." Notice the hole in the basin for the water to drain away when plug was withdrawn. Piscinas came into vogue during the 12th century. Wherever we see one in an old church, it is a sure indication that an altar once stood there, they were generally on the south side of it and sometimes contained a shelf to place the sacred vessels upon.

The place where we are now standing was **The Chantry Chapel.** It was once divided off from the church by a lovely screen, called a Parclose Screen. The cuttings in the capitals of the pillars of the chancel arches show where the screen was fixed. During the last 200 years before the Reformation chantry chapels increased. Money and property was left by individuals and guilds for masses to be sung or chanted for the repose of the souls of the departed, such being the belief of those days.

The South Chancel Arches rest on an octagonal pillar with a capital of plain moulding corresponding to the pilaster at each end, technically called Responds. The base of the



MOULTON CHURCH - NORTH ARCADE

pillar is plain, resting on a plinth. The responds have corbels or carvings projecting from the wall. These used to be sculptures of human faces, but evidently were defaced to receive the screens. The capitals of the two responds support the inner order (or ring) of the arches.

We now take up our position in **The Chancel** facing the East Window. It is in memory of Mr. Philadelphus Jeyes who died in 1879, his wife dying in 1877. The window has already been described, the stained glass represents "The Last Supper."

The tablets in the chancel are in memory of members of the Nethercote family. Frederick Clayton who died 1829, Mary 1834, John Rowland 1846. Note the two different ways of spelling Nethercoat. It is said father and son could not agree upon the point.

In the right hand corner is another piscina, decorated style, trefoil headed. Its basin has been levelled up to place vessels thereon. Here we have a good view of the inside of the priests' door and there are traces of a window just above, which plainly shows that this was once the outer wall of the old church.

Turning to the left we see the organ. It is single manual and purchased about 1876 by subscriptions and made by Thos. C. Lewis, of London. Before this was obtained, the singing was led by the village orchestra in the gallery, which many of the old people remember.

We next examine **The North Chancel Arch** under which the organ stands. It is lofty and pointed, supported by corbels which again are defaced to admit a screen. The arch has two orders (or rings) and a label along its edge. On passing through this we stand again in another **Chantry Chapel** which was once divided off by a Parclose Screen, and it will be observed that the capitals have been cut to admit it.

We now enter **The Choir Vestry** to examine the antique chest, where the alms money, valuables and documents used to be kept before the days of safes and banks. As was the custom in those days the chest had three locks and keys which were held by the Vicar and two Churchwardens. No one could unlock the chest until he procured all the three keys.

We pass into **The Clergy Vestry.** Here we see another piscina indicating that this was also a Chantry Chapel and contained an altar. This piscina is very plain with a semi-circular arch foiled, has basin with 8 flutes (or grooves) and ledges for a shelf. Here we see the broken miniature font of 1816-1884, and the stone lid of a medieval coffin with 15th century carving.

Here is kept a more modern parish chest and much larger, containing the church registers from the days of Queen Elizabeth, and other valuable documents. In this chest was discovered by Mr. Sidney Madge, the antiquarian, in 1895, the certificate of settlement of William Carey on his removal from Paulerspury to Moulton. It was dated May 11th, 1785. He was Baptist minister here 1785 to 1789, founded the Baptist Missionary Society and became the pioneer of modern missionary effort. His cottage may still be seen in West Street with suitable tablet. His father and grandfather were Parish Clerks at Paulerspury.

From the vestry we obtain a better view of the North East window which has already been described. It is similar to the second one in the north aisle. At the base of the splay of this window may be seen two corbel heads. (the splay is the slanting surface of the window jamb). These corbels cannot be described as handsome carvings of the human face and this is not their original position. Each head supports a short shaft.

The memorial tablet in the middle used to be on one of the pillars. It is in memory of John Chapman, gentleman, who died in 1730.

The photographs on the wall show the church as it was before the restoration, inside and out, and of the Rev. Thos. Sanders, Vicar of Moulton 1838 to 1878.

Returning again to the Chancel, we advance down **The Nave** and admire the beautiful roof restored in 1884. The gas pendants noticeable all about the church were recently constructed out of the old oil pendants (1929). Proceeding as far as the churchwarden's pews indicated by their staves, we turn round and examine the fine chancel arch. It is supported by demi-columns, of two orders, with shafts having moulded capitals, the bases being formed of high plinths.

On each side of the arch are little doorways in the walls above. This is where the beam of the rood screen rested and where the priest came out to perform Mass on festival occasions. There probably would be a staircase up to it in those days. A Rood means a Cross or Crucifix, and the screen below it was called the Rood Screen.

Once more we turn westward and our attention is at once arrested by the different kinds of architecture in each arcade, pointed arches on the south side and rounded arches on the north. On the north side we discern evidences that the outer wall of the church was here before the aisles existed. The window is visible on the other side revealing the existence of a very slanting Norman splay.

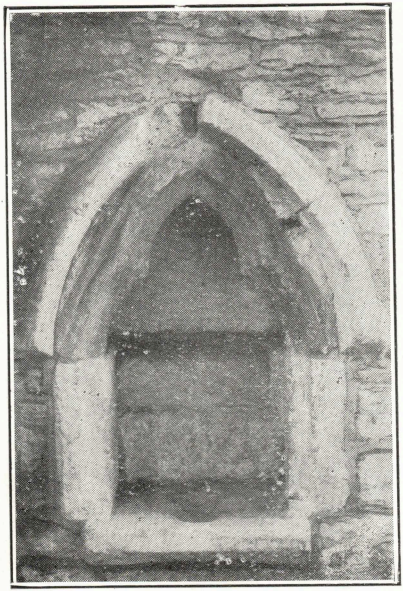
The South Arches are Decorated and rest upon three plain octagonal piers and responds. All are of the same design with moulded capitals and bases on square plinths.

The Western Arch is beautiful and lofty with four orders (or rings), the inner order resting on shafts with capitals and bases. If we look above the arch we shall see traces of the gable of the earlier roof. The older inhabitants can remember when this arch was filled up and a gallery built in front of it. The bell-ringing floor was about half way up, and entered by a little doorway in the left hand corner which is now built up. All this was cleared away at the restoration in 1884.

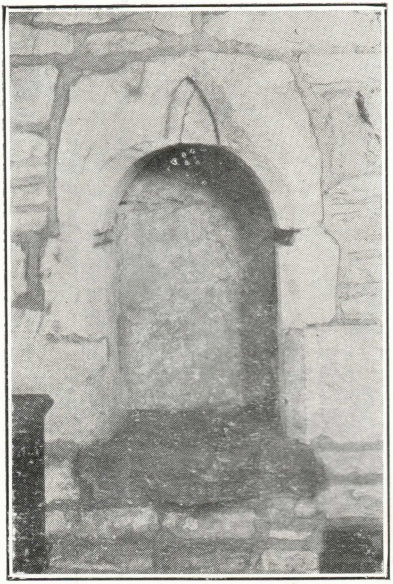
The Font is quite modern and was placed here in 1884. We have already mentioned the old Norman font destroyed in 1816 and the small Italian font broken in 1884, and now in the vestry.

We now proceed to the **North Aisle.** The Decorated windows have already been described. The arches here are rounded and all of two orders (or rings) with flat soffets (or under surfaces). The small chink-like top of a Norman window may here be seen, which proves that that was once part of the outer wall.

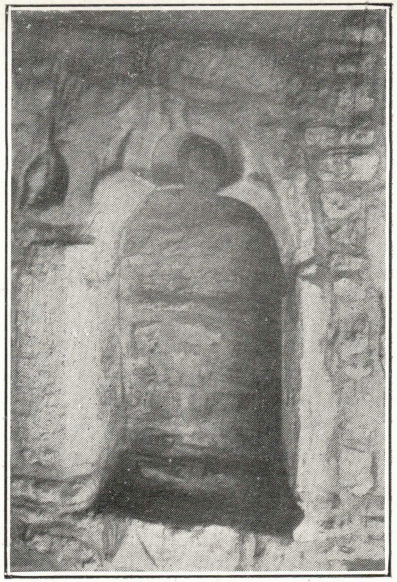
The Pillars of the north arcade are a puzzle to antiquarians, who turn from them in despair. There are three altogether, and no two are alike. The writer has a theory of their construction which if not correct will lend interest to the examination of them.



SOUTH CHANTRY PISCINA.



NORTH CHANTRY PISCINA



CHANCEL PISCINA.

SAXON CROSS SHAFT.

It is as follows. When the church was about to be rebuilt in 1300 three Moultonian masons undertook to build these three pillars. Of course each acknowledged no master and each had his own idea how it should be done. We will call them Thomasius, Ricardius and Henricius. No. 1, Thomasius (the Western) decides to begin by laying down a huge square plinth or base which he tries to carve but gives it up. No. 2, Ricardius (the Middle) decides to go one better and lays down a huge octagonal or eight sided base. No. 3, Henricius (the Eastern) goes one better still and constructs a cross shaped base designed from four squares. Thus they all finish their bases.

No. 1 (Thomasius) now resolves to construct a massive Norman circular shaft and sets to work. No. 2 (Ricardius) aspiring to higher things decides on a six-sided shaft. But he comes to grief. He cannot get his six sides or their angles equal. No. 3 (Henricius) appears to be more clever and goes in for an elaborate Norman pillar with a square central shaft, having a semi-circular engaged shaft on each side.

As the work advances Thomasius and Ricardius pause to admire the fine work of Henricius and all of a sudden they discard their pet designs and copy him. And now all the three columns advance step by step, side by side, and all exactly alike. They all reach their astragals (the semi-circular moulding or collar) together, likewise the bell of the capital and its mouldings and lastly the abacus or slab from whence the arches sprang. Henricius having won his way by sheer merit it is decided to build the Responds or piers at each end of the arcade exactly alike, with a single attached shaft and thus the columns are finished and ready for the arches, which are thereupon reared.

There is a parable here. Self-will mars the beauty of the church, concord adorns it. The divisions in the church are possible to end in amicable unity.

Approaching the choir vestry we come to **The Sanderson Memorial.** The Sandersons were a county family who lived at the Manor House behind the church and which is now a farm. Notice the armorial bearings, a paly of six (a pale is a broad stripe from top to bottom of a shield), on bend three quatrefoils (a bend is the space

between two parallel lines crossing a shield diagonally). Crest, a helmet and a talbot passant (or walking) on a wreath (a talbot was a species of white hound with long ears so named after the Talbot family). The slab says that the deceased died in 1650, aged 31 years On the ground is a black mutilated slab in memory of another Sanderson. The arms are a chevrom (or inverted V) between three crescents.

The broken gable cross lies here and there are several slabs to the Pages, Mannings, Barbers, Garlicks, etc. The epitaphs are much worn.

We now retrace our steps until we reach **The Belfry.** First of all notice the old Jacobean Communion rails which were removed here at the restoration and cheap common ones put in their place. On looking upward we see the little window with its stained glass. It has two lights and shows the patron saints of the church, St. Peter with his keys, and St. Paul with his sword.

Under the lofty roof in the left hand corner is a very old board containing a list of Moulton charities.

A tablet on the right tells us that the chimes and clock were placed in the tower to the memory of Dr. Lewis, a much beloved physician, and his wife, who died April 3rd and April 6th, 1902 respectively. The tablet was put up December 11th, 1902.

In 1834 a new frame work and fittings were made for the bells at a cost of £138 10s. 0d.

In the ringing chamber is a record of a wonderful peal that was rung for the first time on Moulton bells, May 15th, 1926. It says it was a Plain Bob and 5,040 changes were rung in 3 hours and 10 minutes !

There used to be a foreman bell ringer named John Dickens who lived to be 100 years old. He rang for the Jubilee of George III. in 1810 and for the Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887. Many of our old people remember old John Dickens who went to church on Sunday in a high top hat and an embroidered smock fearfully and wonderfully made.

The church has six bells. There used to be five but they were sent to Leicester to be recast into six by Mr. Arnold in 1795. This was in the time of the Rev William Stanton who was Vicar 62 years (1768 to 1830).

This brings my little history to a close and I cannot conclude in a more fitting way than by giving you the message inscribed on the bells. Treble Bell *Omnia fiant ad gloriam Dei* (Let all things be done to the glory of God). Tenor Bell

"I to the church the living call
And to the grave do summon all."

CHIEF BOOKS CONSULTED.

"Architectural Notes." D. Reynolds and E. Bradley. 1892.
"Architectural Notices." Architectural Society of Northants. 1849.
"Northants. History." Bridges. 1791.
"Northants. History." Baker. 1822.
"Northants. History." Whellan. 1849.
"Moulton Church and Bells." Sydney Madge.
"Our Homeland Churches." Sydney Heath.

READER AND CORRECTOR OF M.S.

Major C. A. Markham, Secretary of the Northants. Archaeological Society.

(See page 11).

THIS STONE WAS DISCOVERED UNDERNEATH THE CHANCEL DURING THE RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH IN 1884.

IT IS PART OF THE SHAFT OF A CHURCHYARD CROSS OF SAXON WORKMANSHIP AND SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN BURIED IN THE GROUND SINCE 1264 WHEN THE OLD CHURCH WAS DESTROYED.

THE FIGURE OF A DRAGON IS DISCERNABLE. THE INTERLACED WORK IS COMPOSED OF A DOUBLE ROW OF SPIRAL KNOTS EXCELLENT IN DESIGN AND WORKMANSHIP.